

something that Democrats would be able to relate to. So we have 100 donkeys here. Imagine that this is 100 donkeys of spending. Here's what this bill will do. There, Mr. Chairman, are 99 donkeys; 100 donkeys here, 99 donkeys there. Probably having a hard time, I would imagine, Mr. Chairman, people in the gallery are probably having a hard time telling the difference. That's because there isn't much difference. That's because it isn't a big cut, it isn't a big reduction. If you have a million-dollar program, all we're asking is for that program to get by on \$90,000. If it's \$100 million, we're asking them to get by on a mere \$99 million. If it's a billion-dollar program, do you think that some government agencies can squeak by on \$990 million rather than a billion?

But here's the big point: It doesn't look like a lot of difference in donkeys, but if we do that, if we spend the 99 instead of 100 on every single government program, we save \$30 billion. That is real money. And this is how you save it: a little bit at a time. Ask a million-dollar program to get by on \$990,000, ask a billion-dollar program to get by on 1 percent less. And when you do that with every single program in government, you save \$30 billion a year. That, Mr. Chairman, is how we can get to a balanced budget without not only the largest tax increase in American history, without raising taxes on the hardworking people in America at all simply by asking government day by day, get by on 1 percent less. I think we can do it. I think we should vote for this amendment.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, again, the former ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. Conte, when he was here in the House of Representatives, used to say that this is the "meat-ax approach." An across-the-board amendment doesn't make any selectivity between the national parks and other issues. It's just an across-the-board cut.

Again, I must say that the reason we object on this particular bill is because over the last 7 years the administration has cut the Interior Department by 16 percent in real terms. And the cut for EPA is 29 percent and that cuts the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. I mean, it's hard to believe that this administration wanted to cut the Clean Water Revolving Fund by \$670 million. How do you do that and go to bed at night and actually get sleep? I mean, it's shocking to me, these cuts.

The Forest Service funds all the programs for taking care of our multiple-use Forest Service land. More recreation is provided by the Forest Service than actually the Park Service, and they cut that by 35 percent since 2001.

This is a crisis. These agencies are headed down a devastating path, not having enough staff to do their work. The refuges didn't have enough staff. The Park Service didn't have enough staff. Every one of these agencies were losing people year after year because

their fixed costs weren't covered. So this was a crisis situation.

I think everything we've done in this budget is totally responsible. And I reject the idea of any across-the-board meat-ax approach, using the language of the former ranking member, Mr. Conte from Massachusetts. And I just hope that we can move on here and get to the rest of these amendments.

There are a lot of people on the other side who told me they would like to go home on Friday morning, they would like to see us get done on Thursday night. So I don't want anybody to think that we're not in opposition to all these things. I just want them to know that we're trying to work on a bipartisan basis to get the job of this committee done as quickly as possible.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York, a member of the committee (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank the distinguished chairman.

I took note of the gentleman's \$30 billion in donkeys. I would like to commend to the gentleman's attention \$3 trillion in elephants, which is \$3 trillion in debt that the other side built up while they were in control of this Congress; \$3 trillion elephants rampaging through the Federal Treasury, crushing our future, strangling them with debt.

Now, the other side has said that they want to cut and we want to spend. Absolutely not true. We've cut these programs. We're being stewards with the people's money. We have eliminated over 200 programs in this project. The real issue is not cutting versus spending; it's priorities. Mr. Chairman, the American people understand priorities.

The other side had no problem finding the money to give Halliburton, in no-bid contracts, unlimited amounts of money to big corporations like Halliburton in no-bid contracts. What we're saying is let's instead invest that money in the Clean Air Act.

The other side had no problem bulldozing to passage billions and billions of dollars in tax cuts for the richest oil company executives on the face of the planet who have made more profits than any company has ever made in the course of human history. What we're saying is let's prioritize differently. Instead of using that money for tax cuts to oil company executives, let's invest it in the Clean Water Act. Let's invest it in the Environmental Protection Agency.

So this isn't just about cutting and spending. This is about priorities that the American people want us to pursue. The same choices that they make at their kitchen tables, in their living rooms, in their dining rooms, in their small businesses are the choices that we're suggesting. Instead of the wasteful spending on the special interests, the pharmaceutical companies, the big oil companies, we're saying let's return some of that money in investments on clean air and clean water.

Mr. DICKS. And I would just add, if the gentlemen are so confident of their position, why don't we just have a vote on this and move along and get the committee's work done.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the attempt at defending the remarkable increased spending on the part of the majority party. To describe this amendment as a devastating cut is curious. Only in Washington is a decrease in the increase a cut.

It's important that the American people appreciate that the proposal of the majority party is to spend in this bill \$27.6 billion. This amendment, if enacted would provide for the spending of \$27.4 billion, hardly, Mr. Chairman, a devastating cut.

I would also ask my good friend from Washington to simply read the amendment. It talks about an across-the-board cut. The amendment states that "appropriations made by this Act are hereby reduced in the amount of \$276 million." That's not an across-the-board cut. That's a 1 percent reduction in the total allocation in this bill. So it is disingenuous of my good friend to make those kinds of comments.

I would also say that he says that we need to move quickly. I would say, Mr. Chairman, that any time we spend defending the American taxpayer is time well spent.

And then they talk about priorities. Mr. Chairman, the correct priority we have is defending the American taxpayer.

I am pleased to yield 1 minute to my good friend from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

Mr. LAMBORN. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Georgia for yielding 1 minute.

The distinguished colleague who just spoke from New York made a good point about the deficit being too large. I agree with him 100 percent on that. But now is the chance to step up to the plate. Now is the chance we can do something about adding to the deficit.

The bill in front of us goes \$1.9 billion more than what the President has requested and \$1.2 billion more than last year's amount. So we have a chance now to do something about building up the deficit. So if we're sincere about being concerned about it, now is the chance to actually do something.

A 1 percent cut allows the committee to do the work of prioritizing and making sure that the money goes to the most critical programs and has the chance to reprioritize and take away some of the fat. And I would suggest that we do not need for the National Endowment of the Arts an increase of \$35 million, or 29 percent; 29 percent more than last year. We have a lot of room to cut this bill.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to the time remaining on each side.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman has 9 minutes remaining and